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When a word is printed in bold, click on it to find its meaning.
Birthdays are special events that many people celebrate.

New Year’s Eve is celebrated all around the world with fireworks.

Celebrations are events that are held on special occasions. Some are events from the past that are still celebrated. Others celebrate important times in our lives, or activities such as music.

Some celebrations involve only a few people. Others involve whole cities or countries. Large celebrations take place across the world.
What are traditional celebrations?

Traditional celebrations are passed down from older people to younger people. Some are thousands of years old. Most countries have traditional celebrations.

There are many traditional celebrations held in European countries.

Traditional celebrations are held for many reasons. Most remember events from the past. Some have changed over time, while others are the same as they have always been.

Dragon dances have been part of Chinese New Year celebrations for a long time.
New Year’s Eve

New Year’s Eve is celebrated on 31 December. This is the last day of the year. It celebrates the end of one year and the beginning of the next.

New Year’s Eve has been celebrated for about 400 years. However, it dates back to ancient times. Over time, the date of New Year’s Eve has changed.

People celebrate New Year’s Eve in New York’s Times Square with balloons and confetti.

New Year’s Eve in 2000 was a large celebration to welcome a new century.
New Year’s Eve celebrations have many traditions. These include fireworks displays, parties and wishing people a ‘happy new year’.

Large fireworks displays take place on Sydney Harbour in Australia.

On New Year’s Eve, people try and start the new year in a happy way. They hope they will stay happy in the coming year.

Many people like to spend New Year’s Eve with family and friends.
Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year is a big Chinese celebration. It is celebrated in China and in countries with large numbers of Chinese people. The celebrations include fireworks and parties.

Chinese New Year is based on a lunar calendar. The celebration date changes each year, but it is always in January or February.

Dragon dances are a part of Chinese New Year celebrations in many countries.

Red envelopes containing money are given to children during Chinese New Year.
April Fools’ Day

April Fools’ Day is celebrated in many European countries on 1 April. The origins of April Fools’ Day are unknown. However, it has been celebrated for hundreds of years.

On April Fools’ Day people play tricks on their friends. The jokes must be played before midday or the joker becomes the fool!
May Day

May Day is a very old celebration. It is held in the northern hemisphere and celebrates the end of a long winter. It takes place on 1 May each year.

May Day is held when the trees start to blossom in the northern hemisphere.

On May Day people dance around a maypole decorated with garlands and ribbons. The garlands are often made of blossom. Another tradition is crowning the Queen of May.

Dancing around a maypole is a May Day tradition.
Halloween

Halloween is celebrated on 31 October each year. It is a very old festival and it has many traditions. Today, Halloween celebrates scary things.

Carving a pumpkin into a lantern is a Halloween tradition.

Children dress up in scary costumes and go to houses to ask for treats. If they do not get a treat they play a trick!

Children enjoy ‘trick-or-treating’ at Halloween.
Thanksgiving, America and Canada

Thanksgiving is a celebration that started in America and Canada. It was a time when people gave thanks for the harvest. The celebration is hundreds of years old.

People spend time with family and friends on Thanksgiving.

Today, Thanksgiving is a holiday in America and Canada. People share a special Thanksgiving dinner with family and friends.

Roast turkey is a traditional Thanksgiving Day food.
Festival of Yams, West Africa

The Festival of Yams is a harvest festival celebrated in West Africa. It is held in August at the end of the rainy season. The festival includes singing and parades.

People thank the gods and their ancestors for a good harvest of yams. Yams are given to people in the villages.

Dancing is part of the Festival of Yams.

Yams are a main harvest food in West Africa.
Chu Suk, Korea

Chu Suk is a Korean festival that celebrates the harvest and family. People leave rice and fruit at their ancestors’ graves. They also have a special family feast.

A dance is held the night before Chu Suk. Women sing and dance in a circle. Other Chu Suk activities include wrestling, archery, singing and playing music.
The Calgary Stampede is a festival and **rodeo** held in Canada. It is celebrated in July for ten days. Horse races and rodeo events are part of the festival.

Thousands of visitors from around the world come to take part in the festival. As well as the rodeo, there are horse races, dances and parties.

Rodeo events are a big part of the festival.

Wagon races are popular at the Calgary Stampede.
The Running of the Bulls is held in Spain and France. Many bulls run through the streets of towns. People race in front of the bulls.

Bull-running festivals have been held for hundreds of years. They are still very popular and many people come to watch.

The most famous bull-running festival is in Pamplona in Spain.

The running of the bulls can be dangerous, and sometimes people can get hurt.
Try this!

Try this quiz
Find the answers to these questions in the book. (You can check your answers on page 32.)

1. How long has New Year’s Eve been celebrated?
2. What are given to children at Chinese New Year?
3. What type of festival is West Africa’s Festival of Yams?
4. Where is Chu Suk celebrated?
5. Why do people celebrate May Day?

Try this activity
Next time you celebrate a special occasion with your friends or family, ask yourself:

• Why are you celebrating?
• How long have people been celebrating this event?
• Are there other places in the world where people celebrate the event?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ancestors</td>
<td>people who came before, such as grandparents and great-grandparents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ancient</td>
<td>happened thousands of years ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garlands</td>
<td>flowers and leaves joined together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harvest</td>
<td>when the fruits and vegetables on farms are gathered or picked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lunar calendar</td>
<td>a calendar that is based on the movements of the Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maypole</td>
<td>a pole that is decorated with streamers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>northern hemisphere</td>
<td>the countries and regions in the northern half of our planet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>origins</td>
<td>the time when something first started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rodeo</td>
<td>an event that features cattle-roping, bull-riding and horseriding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yams</td>
<td>root vegetables, mostly grown in Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Answers to the quiz on page 30
1 About 400 years
2 Red envelopes containing money
3 A harvest festival
4 Korea
5 To celebrate the end of winter

w
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